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**The Effectiveness of Emotional Management Group Training on  
Children's Self-concept**

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This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of emotional management group training on self-concept of first grade elementary school children in Semnan, and also to evaluate gender differences in their self-concept. Therefore, 46 children (22 boys and 24 girls) of first grade of elementary school were randomly selected. Data collection was done through the administration of Children's Self-Concept Scale (CSCS). Pre-test, post-test single group design was used for evaluating the efficiency of group training. Data were analyzed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and independent sample T-test. Data analysis showed that emotional management group training led to an improvement in self-concept of first grade elementary school children. Finding shows the practical importance of emotional management group training, while gender variable was not effective in that.

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**Keywords:** emotional management, self-concept, group training.**Introduction**

In the current view, self-concept is a cognitive schema which anyone forms for organizing his/her perceptions, feelings and attitudes (Campbell et al, 1996). In fact, self-concept is part of the ego which becomes increasingly stable from middle childhood. During elementary school years, children engage in social comparison and find self and others' unique capabilities. They put more importance on peer approval and therefore think about their strengths and weaknesses. They also learn to control negative emotions threatening their self-concept, to achieve their peer acceptance (Berk, 2001).

Through increasing their cognitive capabilities and others' feedback, change will occur in content of children's self-concept. Emotional management training, by changing the self structure, can improve self-concept and ultimately result in adaptation. Emotional self-management makes school children achieve feelings of emotional efficiency and foster a good self-image and optimistic attitude and also can counter with emotional challenges and deal more effectively with them.

Literature review shows that most of previous researches focused on comparison of relationship between emotional disclosure components and self-concept of adults (Harker & Keltner, 2001; Laghai & Joseph, 2000;

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Tavani & Losh, 2003; Park, 2003; Simpson & Stroh, 2004), and other researches is related to investigate the effectiveness of life skills training on self-esteem, self-concept and social adjustment of adults (Schechtman, 2005; Albertyn, Kapp & Groenewald, 2001).

But, because of social and cultural changes, there are some concerns about ethical, social and emotional nurturance of children and it seems that we can't access to our ethical, social and psychological goals just through general educational courses. So, according to the importance of the role of emotional self-management on self-image, adaptation and mental health, this study aimed to evaluate the gender role on children's self-concept, and also to investigate the effectiveness of emotional management group training on school children's self-concept.

## **1. Materials and methods**

### *1.1. Sample*

Participants were 46 first grade students (22 boys and 24 girls) from a nonprofit elementary school in Semnan city. In a semi-structural design with pretest-posttest single group, at first all first grade students of these two schools in educational year of 2010-11 attended in pre-test. Children's Self-Concept Scale was read aloud for each subject and helps them if needed for its completion. Then, those who their score in self-concept scale was in moderate range (totally 22 boys and 24 girls), were randomly selected. Entrance criteria to this study were: 1- the written consent of parents and students for participation in the study, 2- to gain self-concept scores in a moderate range.

### *2.2. Instruments*

Children's Self-Concept Scale (CSCS) was used in this study. This scale is a common instrument for assessment of self-concept, which has been provided by Piers-Harissis. This scale is consisted of eighty yes/no questions, and is consisted of fourteen additional questions or lie detector questions. It has six subscales of behaviour, intellectual and educational condition, physical appearance and attitudes, anxiety, fame and happiness and satisfaction. Questions are scored in the positive or negative direction to reflex the evaluation's dimensions. High score in the scale shows satisfying self-concept and the range of scores is between 0 and 78. Piers and Harris (1964) using test-retest after 4 months, reported 0.72 for reliability and using Kuder-Richardson, 0/88 and internal consistency by Cronbach's alpha between 0.89 to 0.93 (Parish, Taylor, 1978).

In Iran, Ahmadi Hekmati Kar (1993) obtained, by Cronbach alpha method, reliability of 0.91 for first grade girl students of guidance school, 0.94 for second grade girl students of guidance school, 0.92 for third grade girl students of guidance school, 0.88, 0.93, and 0.90 for first, second and third grade boys students of a guidance school accordingly.

### *1.2. Intervention*

For improving the effectiveness of group training and increasing interactions between members, participants were divided into four groups (2 boy groups and 2 girls groups) and participated in 2 treatment sessions per week and each session last for 1 hour. After the completion of training sessions, Children's Self-Concept Scale (CSCS) was administered again. Time management group training program was developed based on Life Skills Training Guide by Nikparvar Fard (2005) and it was consisted of issues such as different feelings, feeling of happiness and its causes, anger symptoms and causes, and stress management strategies during five training sessions.

### *1.3. Data analysis*

Data were analyzed by SPSS-15. Descriptive statistic indexes and Independent Sample T-Test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used for the analysis of the data.

## 2. Result

First of all, the hypothesis of homogeneity of variances is established. Table 1 confirms that the effect of emotional management group training is significant for increasing self-concept. In other words, the mean of self-concept score in post test has increased significantly in compare with pretest phase ( $P < 0/05$ ), indicating the practical importance of emotional management group training. On the other hand, table 2, shows that there was no significant difference between mean of self-concept scores of girls ( $M=51/12$ ) and boys ( $M=51/04$ ) in the posttest.

Table 1. Effectiveness of group therapy on children's self-concept

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Effect Size
Pre-test	125.93	1	125.93	4.83	0.03	0.11
Group	0.162	1	0.162	0.001	0.93	0.00
Error	1068.84	41	26.06			
Total	115945.00	44				

Table 2. Evaluating the Role of Gender in Self-Concept

Group	N	T	M	SD	Sig
Boys	21	-0.04	51.04	0.96	10.12
Girls	2		51.12		10/9

$P < 0.05$

## 3. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of emotional management group training on self-concept of first grade elementary school children of Semnan, and evaluating gender differences in their self-concept. Findings showed that emotional management group training resulted in improving self-concept of children in post test phase. These are consistent with previous studies about the effectiveness of life skills group training on emotional reactions, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, self-expression, self-efficacy and social adaptation (Haghighi, Mousavi, Mehrabizadeh Honarmand, Bashalideh, 2006; Gambel and Baxter, 2006; pick, Givaudan, & Poortinga, 2003; Kaviani, 2007). In fact, findings show that occurred changes in post test phase have been the result of application of emotional self-management strategies and techniques trained by therapist.

These findings show that emotional management group training caused school children to recognize that the existence of feelings such as melancholy, happiness, anger and fear is natural and experiencing unsatisfying feelings is not bad or disgusting. And they can feel happy by doing so many acts and discover the causes of anger and tension, and realize the diversity of anger level in different situations and utilize their self and others relaxation techniques in stressful situations. In other words, emotional self-management results in cognitive development and changing the content of self-concept in children. This change causes children to evaluate more realistically their psycho-social situation capabilities and take a positive attitude toward their aptitude, therefore capable them to deal effectively with life tensions and conflicts and resolve conflicts with emotional awareness and increase their social adaptation by preventing damaging behaviors.

Also, there was no significant difference between self-concept in girls and boys, which is consistent with findings of Hog & Renzuli (1993) and Feldhusen & Nimolos (1992). Comprehending equal feedback from environments can be considered as an underlying cause. In other words, nowadays there is little ethnic and cultural distance compared to the past and it is tried to contact with equal attitude with boys and girls. So, significant social and cultural

evolutions in the country can be considered as the ineffectiveness of gender role in self-concept. Loss of control group and follow up phase was of the limitations of our study, hope that future researches try to abate them.

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